

Southern Towing Company

Newsletter

December 2007

FCC License

A requirement to serve as Pilot or Captain is that you must have an FCC radio operator's license. If you are a steersman you need to apply for an FCC license.

Fingerprinting

Unless a security clearance has been completed w/in the last year, fingerprints are required for basically all USCG REC transactions whether renewal, duplicate, upgrade, or original.

Service Letters

If you need a service letter for your license or MMD application contact Paula several days before you plan to come to the office to pick it up. Service letters take some time to research and prepare.

Dress Right for Safety

Whenever you are working on the boat or a barge you are to wear the proper attire. Our STOP Manual explains the right thing to wear for different circumstances. As a basic requirement you are to wear long pants, work shoes and a T-shirt with sleeves, and a workvest. We never allow you to work in shorts, cutoff or tanktop shirts or sneakers. It is up to the wheelhouse personnel to set the example and to enforce our safety rules. Depending on the work you are doing additional safety gear may be required. For example, safety goggles, chemical protective suit, earplugs, gloves or other safety equipment may be required.

Near Miss

Recently while the M/V Bill Stegbauer was in a lock one of our crewmembers lost his balance and fell overboard. Lester Farmer acted quickly to safely retrieve the man who fell overboard. Luckily everyone was wearing their work vest. Well done Lester Farmer!

Designated Examiners

Good news! The Coast Guard will begin approving Designated Examiners for a period of five years instead of the current two. This change will apply to all original approvals and renewals of previously granted approvals that occur on and after November 1, 2007. This will not change the expiration date of existing approvals.

Taking That First Step

Just about every tip on staying healthy includes a reminder to exercise. But how much exercise is enough? If your activity level is at or near zero, you should start moving, because any exercise is better than no exercise at all, says the American Heart Association. Start slow and work your way up to exercising for 30 to 60 minutes on most days of the week. Be sure to check with your health care provider before beginning an exercise program.

HAZWOPER Class

Congratulations to Roy Victory, Chris Hughes, Tom McCoin, David Gallaher, and Mitchell Meek for successfully completing the 40 hour Hazardous Waste and Emergency Response course presented by Southwest Tennessee Community College.



Nautical Trivia

In the Doldrums. Doldrums is the name of a place in the ocean that is located near the equator and is

sailing ship caught in the Doldrums can be stranded due to lack of wind. Often times this expression refers to a period of inactivity or depression.

Healthy Snacking

Snacking on healthy foods not only helps you avoid adding extra pounds, but also helps prevent tooth decay. The National Institute of Dental Research says that raw vegetables, fresh fruit and whole grain crackers and breads are better for your teeth, and also are good sources of nutrients. No matter what time you reach for a snack, make sure it's low in sugar and fat, the agency says.

Flags

Check your flags occasionally. Replace any torn or faded flags. We do not look professional if we are flying worn out flags.

MMD

It is company policy that you maintain the validity of your Merchant Mariners Document by renewing it when required. If you have moved into the wheelhouse you must still keep your MMD valid. Don't let it expire. If you have any questions contact Bobby Jones.

TWIC Updates

The Transportation Security Agency (TSA) has started to take applications for the required Transportation Workers Identification Credential at several locations including Baton Rouge, Corpus Christi, Beaumont, Houston, and Lake Charles. They'll soon open several other locations. We will let you know when they open. Remember, a TWIC is required for every license and MMD holder and for everyone working on a boat to which the vessel security regulations apply. That includes most of our boats. We are requiring all crewmembers to apply for a TWIC. The deadline is 9/25/08. On-line pre-enrollment will be available.

License & MMD Application Status

To check the status of your application for a new or renewal of you old license or MMD you can go on line. Go to <https://homeport.uscg.mil> and click on "Merchant Mariners" on the left side of the page. Then on the next page click on "Merchant Mariner Application Status" at the top of the page. After you enter the information asked you should see the status of your application. There is a link to this site on our web site.

401K Plan

January 1st is the next enrollment date for the 401K Plan. If you are not enrolled your are missing out on some free money.

Tax Information

You should have recently received a copy of the tax information on file at the office for you to verify. This had your social security number, number of dependants, how you are claiming exemptions, etc. If there were any errors

they need to be corrected by returning that form with the corrections to the office.

Service Awards

Congratulations to Stephen Wage, Richard Bender and Jerry Guillory for completing 10 years, to Mike Overturf for completing 15 years and to David Curtis and Tommy McCoin for completing 25 years of service with Southern Towing Company.

Environmental Protection

Environmental protection (also referred to as pollution prevention) is everyone's responsibility. It is the firm policy of Southern Towing Company that we will not pollute the environment. We will not allow our vessels to serve as a source for pollution of the waterway, either by an avoidable accident or by an intentional act on the part of a crewman. Willful violation of this policy will result in termination of your employment. We have an excellent track record thanks to our crewmembers. Preventing pollution is an ongoing effort. We cannot become

complacent. Keep up the good work and don't pollute!!

USCG Centralizes Licensing

This month the National Maritime Center in Martinsburg, WV will take over most functions from the Regional Exam Centers. Mariners will continue to use the existing RECs in various ports across the nation for face-to-face customer service and to ensure their applications are ready for evaluation by the NMC. Once an application is accepted at an REC, it will be sent to the NMC for processing. The NMC will send issued credentials directly to Mariners. A new toll free call center is also available (1-888-427-5662) to answer questions and provide information.

Happy Holidays

We all wish you and your families a safe and happy holiday season.

